DEVELOPING DEEPER LEARNING COMPETENCIES
VIA PROJECT-BASED LEARING

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Abstract. Effectively elaborated team-project is expedient method to develop deeper learning competencies and to motivate students in language learning. This study aims to introduce the project 'Odessa city tour' as well as its design, procedure and the outcomes among the first-year students of Odessa National University specialized in International Economic Relations. The preliminary results of the research show that students initially have different concepts about guide's work in whole and the city's sights presentation structure and vocabulary in particular. The conclusion can also be drawn that students' level of motivation for professional communication positively correlates with their opinion about themselves as prospective guides-amateur receiving their foreign guests.

Keywords: project-based learning, team project, learning competencies, students' motivation

INTRODUCTION. Project-based learning (PBL) is a teaching approach that engages students in sustained, collaborative real-world investigations. Projects are organized around a driving question, and students participate in a variety of tasks that seek to meaningfully address this question. Because learning is a social activity, teaching methods can scaffold on students' prior experiences and include a focus on community and culture. Creating this culture through PBL activities is a teaching method in which students gain knowledge and skills by working for an extended period of time to investigate and respond to a complex question, problem, or challenge. Hence, project-based learning is an effective and enjoyable way to learn and develop deeper learning competencies required for success in college, career and civic life (Hanneya & Savin-Baden, 2013).

It is important to realize that using project-based learning instruction does not mean doing away with a structured curriculum (Coffey, 2015). Keeping in mind this idea the team project was planned and developed focusing on curriculum outcomes where the development of general and specific learning competencies is a necessary part of improving University education. This may require complex combination of

skills and abilities integrated in the process of professional teaching standards that also include essential knowledge, dispositions, and commitments that allow educators to reach the goal. There are three components that target specific areas in pedagogy: student-centered instructions, establishing clear objectives and expectations, and providing immediate feedback.

In PBL, learning is contextual, creative, and shared. Students collaborate on meaningful projects that require critical thinking, creativity, and communication in order for them to answer challenging questions or solve complex problems (Coffey, 2015). Students aren't just engaged to determine their understanding of academic content, but their ability to successfully apply that content when solving authentic problems. Through this process, PBL gives students the opportunity to develop the real-life skills required for success in today's world (Pease & Kuhn, 2011).

Methods. An observational study design was used for the research in order to gain an understanding of the team-project effectiveness for University students. Video data were collected from 54 first-year students specialized in International Economic Relations who were engaged in the team project within the period of autumn 2019 – spring 2020 in Odessa I.I. Mechnikov National University.

During the project, participants were placed in two groups; all oral presentations delivered by students were filmed; video material was presented in class to receive a peer's and teacher's feedback. The first session i.e. a tour around Odessa, took place in autumn 2019 with accompanying teachers and foreign students acting the part of operators; the second session will take place in April-May 2020. The study revolves around the following research questions with an objective of further analysis: 1. What learning competencies are developed within the framework of the project? 2. What common problems do the teachers face when developing PBL activities? 3. What common problems do the students face with in the process of a team project?

Procedure

PBL activities were categorized in accordance with competencies intended for development (Table 1).

Table 1 Correlation between PBL activities and general / specific competencies

	PBL activity	Competencies developed
·	The development of the route about the city center and choosing the place of interest for presentation.	Problem solving and Communication skills: sharing the information with the other team members, contributing effectively to team objectives, displaying courtesy and tack in dealing with others.
·	Searching for materials regarding Odessa's sights.	Analysing, summarising, conveying the information and ideas on particular city's main attraction, checking information and explaining details with reasonable precision.
·	Distribution of roles.	Collaboration skills: preventing and resolving conflicts between team members.
·	Presentation in public.	Oral communication and public speaking skills: arranging presentation content and structure, interacting with the audience with confidence, maintaining their attention and interest, dealing with questions.
·	Film production: working with video and subtitles.	Imagination skills: flexible creativity, written and visual storytelling. Technology literacy skills: technological expertise.
·	Providing a peer's feedback.	Critical analysis skills: feedback writing.
·	Sharing the	Critical thinking skills: analysing the

	experience with another group.	mistakes of rival-group, seeking the opportunity to learn from the peers.
·	Student-teacher / student-student E-communication	Written communication skills.

After defining project-based learning activities as the operational tool for the team-project fulfilment, participants provided shared (3-4 people in discussion group) answers via Internet to express their thoughts on a common topic:

1. Things that work well during presentation and excursion.

2. Common problems that occurred during presentation and excursion.

Following data collection, participants discussed possible alternatives to address common problems that students encounter followed by things that work well in classrooms.

Preliminary results

The students were placed 3-4 people in subgroup to make a survey of opinions and share their common answers with the whole group. Participants in the study provided the information as follows (Table 2):

Table 2 Survey findings on implementation of 'Odessa city tour' project

Things that work well during presentation and excursion:	Common problems that occurred during presentation and excursion:
• receiving new and interesting information about city and its attractions; • excursion instead of traditional English classes; • opportunity to communicate effectively with group mates and with students from another group;	• limited vocabulary of peers during excursion; • reading from notes instead of speaking from memory; • difficulties in building subtitles in video; • difficulties in shortening

• the independent selection of information; • getting knowledge about *'how to make a presentation successful'*; • learning from peers; • making a film where the group mates star; • communicating to peers and a teacher via e-mail and Viber in English all the time; • work and solve the problems together; • acquiring self-confidence to give excursion to tourists.	the text to be put on a film; • fear to speak in public; • lack of attention from the group; • disrespect to the others' work from the peers; • criticism and negative remarks in feedbacks; • hard work on the team-project.

CONCLUSION. In summary, the findings indicate that PBL (1) not only has a positive effect on students' knowledge and the development of general skills such as problem solving, collaboration and critical thinking but also on the development of professional skills namely public speaking and oral and written communication; (2) increases students' motivation in language learning; (3) enhances University students' autonomous learning. Future research is needed to examine the ways of assignable problems elimination.

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